DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 077 488 JC 730 126

TITLE Recruiting: Making the Open Door a Reality. A Report on the National Dissemination Project for the Community Colleges.

INSTITUTION Washington State Board for Community Coll. Education, Seattle. Research and Planning Office.

NOTE 19p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29

DESCRIPTORS *Community Colleges; Guides; *Interinstitutional Cooperation; *Job Training; *Personnel Selection; Post Secondary Education; *Recruitment

ABSTRACT

The need for improved support service programs in community colleges is explored, and several suggestions are made relating to new procedures for selecting and training recruiters and further development of "active" rather than "passive" recruiting programs. A formal and an informal model for interinstitutional cooperation is presented. (DB)

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RECRUITING:
MAKING THE OPEN DOOR
A REALITY

A Report on the

National Dissemination Project

for the Community Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JUN 28 1973

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

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FOREWORD

This report was prepared by the National Dissemination Project to suggest ways in which community college systems might better serve the needs of minority and disadvantaged students in educational support services.

The National Dissemination Project is an outgrowth of ten earlier Office of Economic Opportunity projects undertaken by state community college agencies to develop comprehensive planning capacities to serve the disadvantaged and to provide institutional support in program development. It has become obvious from the high drop out rate alone, which often approaches 90 percent for disadvantaged students compared with a 30 percent attrition rate for other students, that community colleges are not successfully meeting the support service needs of disadvantaged students. New approaches and new planning efforts are a critical need.

The lessons learned in the OEO planning projects as well as in other innovative programs and projects across the nation have been assessed by the National Dissemination Project. In total, visits have been made to over 100 community colleges in 16 states, and contacts established with state directors and concerned groups and agencies.

In this report, the need for improved support service programs is explored and several suggestions made for change.

Among the changes are: New procedures for selecting and training recruiters and further development of "active" rather than "passive" recruiting programs. Also presented are two models for inter-institutional cooperation--a formal and an informal model.

It is hoped that this report will serve as an introduction and a focus for concern. The National Dissemination Project will continue to provide resource information between now and August 1, 1973, in helping individuals, colleges, and systems better serve minority and disadvantaged students. This will be done by providing information, contacts, and assistance in planning for change. For further information contact:

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INTRODUCTION

After Don Quijote's initial disastrous venture into the world to right wrongs and bring justice to all, he again prepared to sally forth. This time, however, he wanted to go as a proper knight-errant with a squire.

> "During this interval Don Quijote made overtures to a certain laboring man, a neighbor of his and an honest fellow (if such a term can be applied to one who is poor), but with very little wit in his pate. In effect, he said so much to him and made so many promises that the poor wight resolved to set out with him and serve him as squire. Among other things, Don Quijote told him that he should be most willing to go with him because some time or another he might meet with an adventure that would earn for him, in the twinkling of an eye, some island, and he would find himself governor of it. Sancho Panza (for that was the fellows' name) left his wife and children and engaged himself as squire to his neighbor."

This short excerpt from Cervantes' famous novel exemplifies many of the problems community colleges face in their attempts to recruit minority and disadvantaged students. While Don Quijote was successful in recruiting Sancho Panza, in the end Sancho (though a bit wiser for his travels) had really not improved his lot. In a similar way, many minority/disadvantaged students are recruited to community colleges with the expectation of increasing their upward mobility and learning a saleable skill; yet unlike Sancho, who at Quijote's death continued to dream of the wealth he would inherit--the minority/disadvantaged student who drops out of college when he finds the dream does not match reality experiences frustration, disappointment and a loss of valuable time.

In a sense, the dynamics of the Don Quijote-Sancho Panza relationship can be characterized in the following manner:

1. Don Quijote had a very different perception of the world than Sancho.
2. Quijote's promises of wealth were not realistic in light of the existing structure of the society.
3. Quijote and Sancho came from two different backgrounds. Consequently, expectations and perceptions were quite different.

How many community college recruiters are idealistic Don Quijotes, looking at the world through sadly unseeing eyes and offering the prospective student a bag full of unmeetable promises?

This report proposes new approaches to recruiting designed to alleviate some of the problems identified in the above analogy. Each community college needs to be concerned with improving its recruiting practices and better responding to the needs of the disadvantaged. Yet a major conclusion of this study is that few institutions have critically examined their recruiting programs, assuming instead that if a given number of students are recruited, the program is functioning properly.

Recruiting or outreach can be defined in terms of establishing contact with client groups in an effort to bring relevant community college services to those groups. To accomplish this quite difficult undertaking will require: (1) more attention to the selection and training of recruiters, (2) more emphasis upon active rather than

passive recruiting efforts, and (3) the establishment of inter-institutional recruiting channels. This report will deal with each of these needs in turn.

The Selection and Training of Recruiters

A review of nationwide recruiting programs by the National Dissemination Project reveals that many recruiters are selected on a haphazard basis and that this seriously affects program effectiveness. In some colleges visited, work-study students employed as "community liaison workers" were responsible for most recruiting efforts, and their part-time involvement was clearly inadequate for the task at hand. On other colleges, recruiting offices were sorely understaffed and recruiters unfamiliar with the attitutes and expectations of minority/ disadvantaged groups.

Perhaps the single most important factor in the success or failure of a recruiting program is the quality of the people chosen to do the job. Any recruiting program designed to recruit minority/disadvantaged students should utilize individuals familiar with the attitudes and concepts of the potential student. To achieve this end will require more use of students and community representatives as volunteer or part-time recruiters. They should not, however, be used instead of full-time recruiters, but in conjunction with full-time recruiters. The Des Moines Area Community College Central Campus, in Iowa, has employed such an approach quite effectively.

Several programs across the country have made effective use of felons or ex-felons in their penal institute recruiting programs. At Shawnee Community College, in Illinois, felons who

are enrolled in the campus-based educational program, are used to recruit their peers on an informal level within the penal institution. A similar program at the University of Oregon, called Project Newgate, utilizes felons participating in the program as informal recruiters.

Unfortunately, most community college systems have no such recruiting programs and have made little effort to better utilize untapped human resources.

The process by which recruiters are trained also deserves increased attention. Several characteristics and skill areas seem particularly important if a recruiter is to function effectively, and should be stressed in training. These characteristics and skills include:

1. A knowledge of the community structure, its organization, leaders and needs.
2. The ability to communicate with various groups in the community, including minority/disadvantaged groups. This is particularly critical for non-English speaking groups who must overcome the additional barrier of language before utilizing educational opportunities.
3. A knowledge of the educational system and the job market, including college programs, financial aid and employment opportunities.
4. The willingness to maintain continued contact with the recruitee as he begins college work.

Active vs. Passive Recruiting

A review of recruiting practices nationwide reveals continued reliance upon "passive" recruiting methods. Word spreads through the community "grapevine" that a good program is being offered at a community college, or that the college is generally responsive to minority/disadvantaged needs. With a little encouragement from students attending the college, an individual may initiate contact with the institution and subsequently register for classes.

The trouble with this passive approach is that it is haphazard. Only the exceptional community member, well tuned in to the educational grapevine and ready to respond, is ever "recruited."

Recruiting needs to be an "active" pursuit--a well-organized, comprehensive and personalized program which continually seeks new ways of initiating contact with potential students.

Community college sytems might learn a valuable lesson from the Opportunities Industrialization Center's (OIC) aggressive and highly-successful recruiting programs across the country. Typical of an OIC recruiting program is one which was developed in Seattle, Washington, consisting of the following "active" elements:

1. Recruiter selection and training. Recruiters were chosen from the lowest motivated target group and the task of motivating recruiters was undertaken, with emphasis on the basic need for recruiters to be enthusiastic in their work.

2. Recruitment begins. Liaison was established with all existing agencies in the community who had on file the names and addresses of people in the community unemployed and

under-employed. Recruiters were assigned to contact a backlog of people whose records showed a lack of job preparation. Census tracts were reviewed for areas where the hard-core unemployed live, and techniques established for canvassing these neighborhoods. A simple training manual was used to teach recruiters how to attack a block for recruiting. A system of quality control was maintained by accurately listing the character and condition of each person interviewed and the nature of the dwelling unit where an individual lives.

3. Specialized Recruiters. As expansion occured, it became necessary to find techniques of up-grading recruiters and reorganizing their efforts. In order to do this, recruiting was reorganized along the following lines: Feeder Branch offices were established, coordinated by the Supervisor of Recruiting. Recruiters were assigned to a branch under the supervision of a Branch Manager.

Each branch was given two specialized kinds of recruiters. Field recruiters were involved in the following:

(a) Establishing and maintaining recruiter sub-stations throughout the target areas.

(b) Directing personal solicitation and becoming well known in the community.

(c) Attending meetings in the community and working directly with Community Organizers and aides in other OEO programs.

Special Project Recruiters were involved in extensive follow-up on students who:

(a) Did not report for orientation after being contacted.

(b) Did not report for classes after orientation.

(c) Discontinued the program.

An example of the effectiveness of such a recruiting approach is found in the following incident, reported in an OIC recruiting log.

> A Central Area recruiter on January 6, 1967 went to a home in a block he was canvassing and was told by a woman who answered the door that she didn't have time to hear about any kind of poverty or training program. She refused to give the recruiter her name. She accepted the informational brochure the recruiter offered her, as he quickly suggested that SOIC could prove helpful to her if she would take time to read the brochure. On January 18, the recruiter returned to the house and again talked with the woman. She promised to come to SOIC on the following day. The recruiter completed a questionnaire with her name and telephone number. On January 20, a telephone contact was made by the recruiter. He was told that she would enter Intake that day. When checking the Intake list that evening, the recruiter found that she had completed Intake that day.*

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* From the Seattle Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc., final report to the U.S. Department of Labor, August 31, 1968, page 18.

Inter-Institutional Cooperation

To comprehensively approach the problems of recruiting at other than a local level, inter-institutional cooperation, information-sharing, and planning is necessary.

Two useful approaches for cooperation are presented here. Both are models for recruiting minority/disadvantaged students into the community college system, rather than into a particular institution, and eliminating much of the unnecessary competition among colleges for FTE's.

Informal Cooperation. Many community colleges are beginning to cooperate on an informal basis in the dissemination of programmatic and community service information throughout the region. Inter-institutional cooperation generally includes the following elements:

1. The identification of individuals within the community college system who are knowledgeable about college programs and services and who are willing to contact and speak before organizations and high schools within the region. These individuals may include the directors of special services projects, deans of students, minority affairs directors, etc.
2. The communication of community college information to high school classes, church groups, community organizations, etc. At these sessions, potential students are encouraged to express interest in one or more community college programs in the region and may sign-up for additional information.

3. Student responses and interests are communicated to the relevant colleges, who then follow-up with recruiting efforts.

In this approach, it is important to note that the involved community college personnel represents the community college system rather than a single institution. This allows each institution to present its programs on an individual basis and provides for flexibility in recruiting efforts.

While such examples of institutional cooperation are praiseworthy, they do not appear to be sufficiently meeting the needs. A more formal approach to cooperation is called for to better pool recruiting resources. The Chicano Mobile Institute Recruiting Clearinghouse being planned in Washington State is one project aimed at formalizing cooperation.

The Recruiting Clearinghouse Model for Cooperation. Plans initiated by the Chicano Mobile Learning Institute call for a recruiting clearinghouse on programs and services in a nine-college area of Washington. Planning for the clearinghouse is being undertaken with a grant from the Washington State Council on Higher Education. Tentative plans call for cooperation to involve:

1. The establishment of a center to house the clearinghouse.
2. Collection of information on community college programs and dissemination to potential students.
3. Identification of potential students and the presentation of information to groups of up to 300 potential students in periodic "College Day" workshops. Recruiters from involved

colleges would attend these central workshops.

Whatever the form of cooperation, its benefits for recruiting are significant. They include: (1) the sharing of resources for a more effective utilization of community and educational resources, (2) more accessible information and resources, (3) the fostering of a broader sense of community, (4) a supportive rather than a competitive atmosphere among institutions, and, ultimately (5) better service to an enlarged target population.

CONCLUSIONS

Direct "recruitment" activity, as an organized and systematic effort to bring minorities and disadvantaged students into post-secondary institutions, has not been as commonly used as the increasing enrollments of minorities and disadvantaged students might indicate. Most of this increase has been "passive", i.e. caused by forces other than organized recruitment, and pose serious dangers if the expectations of passive entrants are not matched by what institutions have to offer.

To some extent, this has happened because the idea of the "open door," which was advertised as the ideal of American education, promoted a sense of complacence on the part of American educators: if people were not taking advantage of the "open door," this was supposed to be their "choice." Yet all the national statistics on minority enrollment, even in the community college system which is held to be the symbol of the "open door," suggest that this approach has not worked; minorities and disadvantaged are still under-represented on a national basis, even in the community college system, and without "recruitment" there is no hope of bridging the gap.

If recruitment is to succeed, this must be <u>organized out-reach activity</u>, as opposed to "informal" or "grapevine" methods of selecting students. This activity must be carried out by <u>recruiters</u>, skilled in community concerns and aware of higher education's capabilities (and limitations) in meeting individuals'

needs. This activity must be backed up by an administrative/ information base, which coordinates the activities of recruiters and provides access to all kinds of support information as well as program options. There must also be management process which sets goals and objectives for recruitment, deploys community and institutional resources to areas of greatest need (as identified by recruiters), and flexibly allocates recruiting time and effort to programs and program priorities where maximum benefits will accrue to the individual and the institution as a result of recruitment. Presumably, this management process will also include follow-up procedures to test the effectiveness of recruiting, by examining the success and failure of different kinds of recruits in the programs and institutions to which they were recruited; a "tracer MIS" system which monitors the progress of each recruit from entry to program completion (or drop) and for six months to one year beyond, is a vital necessity for a good recruitment program.

Project experience has revealed that many nationally known recruitment programs, such as those associated with Special Services for the Disadvantaged, or Talent Search, have achieved less than the success they should have, because of the lack of a sound MIS/data-information base linked to well-designed administrative procedures. This is because the institutional support to set up these mechanisms has been lacking; "recruitment" has been seen as an adjunct, without reference to existing procedures and methods of entry.

One consequence of poorly planned recruitment programs is the high costs, when measured against successful completions. If a two-thirds rate of completion is assumed for all students in the community college system (somewhat on the high side, judging from available "attrition" data), and a one-third rate for minority/disadvantaged students, then each "success" for minority/disadvantaged students is costing at least three to four times as much as for students as a whole, when additional support costs for "disadvantaged" programs is taken into account. Bad recruitment will increase the cost of "success", not lower it; if large numbers are simply brought in, and drop out in equally large numbers, program costs will inevitably rise without any corresponding increase in "output". (This phenomenon was brilliantly demonstrated in a study done for the OIC system by a group of trainees, in 1967.) While this may suggest the need for relevant programs for students being recruited, even the existence of these programs cannot work unless recruiters are fully aware of their characteristics, and work systematically to match them with trainee needs.

One of the keys to successful recruitment is the skillful deployment of support services and "financial support" incentives to match recruitment goals. This point needs to be emphasized in some detail.

It is generally recognized that all available support resources (Vocational Rehabilitation money, Welfare, EOG grants and loans, BIA money for Indians, Housing and Transportation funds)

will--in the forseeable future--always be far below the levels needed by all potential entrants in post-secondary education. This requires priorities to be set by program category, or institution, involving judgements on which programs it would be "best" to recruit students into. There are grave implications of paternalism and manipulation in setting such priorities, so the procedures must be carefully defined--but if this is not done, "involuntary" priorities created by program constraints could lead to even worse results. Given such priorities, resources should be allocated in advance by program priority, and recruiters as well as entry counselors should be trained in advance in using these resources in the spirit of such priorities. To the potential recruit, the effect would be that of knowing which programs will provide him with most support during his learning period, and he can be helped by the recruiter to make his choice between "attractive" programs and those with greater immediate and/or future rewards. Experience in running such a recruitment program during 1967-68,* in Seattle, showed that (i) a practical system embodying this principle could be devised, (ii) given the full understanding and cooperation of recruiters, there was little or no student dissatisfaction. Apparently, the idea that other priorities exist (in educational programs) than the ones which students have formulated in their own minds, is accepted by disadvantaged

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* Details are available from the National Dissemination Project.

students; in fact, they welcome the opportunity to make their own choice if the options are clearly presented.

Finally, the human side of "recruitment" can never be ignored. Recruitment deals with people--and, in the case of minorities and the disadvantaged, this provides a key factor on which success may well depend.

Colleges and universities have been "recruiting" for many years, but failed to recruit minorities until minorities were themselves involved in the process, the "role model" provided by recruiters, as successful participants in the recruiting institution, is important for potential students. Participation in the "target community" by recruiters may involve many aspects, other than direct recruiting: encouragement to junior-high students as a form of long-run recruitment, representing post-secondary institutions at community forums, participating in community activities. A "recruiter" may, in effect, be alienating himself from the programs he recruits for, in the process of recruiting others. A sound plan for psychological reinforcement of recruiters, and periodic review of concerns at planning and program levels, is needed: to support recruiters themselves, and also (in the process) to learn something about the communities which "recruiters" have become a part of.